

The Arab Public Data Initiative



Dataverse training, October 2019, Amman, Jordan

The ACSS has been working to promote the norm of data preservation and data sharing among social scientists and research institutions in the Arab region through its Arab Public Data Initiative. This initiative began two years ago in the hopes of addressing some of the challenges to making social science data more open and accessible. This is in collaboration with the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina and is guided by an active and engaged advisory committee and has two main components.

The first component is the creation of an Arab social science data archive – the ACSS Dataverse – that went live in June 2019 and is the first interdisciplinary social science data archive in the Arab region. Over 100 datasets have been deposited into the ACSS Dataverse so far and the ACSS is continuously seeking deposits of social science datasets. Datasets that are deposited are de-identified and processed in keeping with global data archiving standards and made available to the public at no charge.

Capacity building in data management and archiving in the region is the second component. To that end, the ACSS is holding a series of training workshops titled “Data Sharing for the Public Good” that bring together researchers, administrators, librarians, and archivists hailing from diverse sectors (public, private, academia, NGOs, UN, etc.). The workshops focus on the importance of data archiving for social science and public policy, and on data archiving global best practices and tools.

For those interested in depositing datasets please contact us at dataverse@theacss.org
For more information on the ACSS Dataverse, please visit www.dataverse.theacss.org

The New Generation Program

In February 2020, the ACSS officially launched a new and bespoke program - the **New Generation of Social Scientists in the Arab Region**. This program is an experiential fellowship program that aims to:

- Help develop a new generation of social scientists who are committed to critical scholarship and research, teaching and mentorship and public engagement;
- Support excellent students at the BA, MA and PhD levels by offering innovative coursework and opportunities for trainings, mentorship, internships and networking;
- Create an institutional network that will support students nationally and regionally and will facilitate knowledge transfer and sharing across the region.

The program will select a cohort of fellows who are passionate about the social sciences and who are studying at different levels at different partner universities in the Arab region. The NewGen fellows will be immersed into a 2-year journey of activities comprising research, training, mentorship, networking and exposure. The ACSS will be developing new high quality and fully online courses and training workshops that aim to enrich the fellows' knowledge and understanding of critical interdisciplinary themes in the social sciences as well as their competencies in research methodologies. Together, these activities seek to incubate a new generation of social scientists capable of, and committed to, conducting research for social change, developing and teaching critical approaches to social issues and building new institutions and infrastructures for knowledge production. All program activities will be implemented in close partnership with partner universities in the region.

The fellowship program has been launched in 4 countries with 4 main partner universities with a vision to expand the program to more countries and universities in the next 2 years. Today, students can apply from 11 universities in 4 countries.

The main partner universities for the first cycle of the program are:

Lebanon: Lebanese American University (main partner), Lebanese University, American University of Beirut, University of Balamand, Saint Joseph University

Palestine: Birzeit University (main partner), Al Najah National University, Al Quds University (Abu Dis)

Tunisia: Sfax University

Egypt: American University in Cairo (AUC), Cairo University, Alexandria University

The first cohort will begin their activities starting July 2020. The pilot of the New Generation fellowship is funded by the Open Society Foundations' Higher Education program and institutional investments from the ACSS.